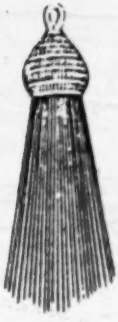
3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Baskets of different shapes and sizes, made of bamboos arrest one's attention in a Santal household. One of them, called "uduli," is used by women while marketing and carrying things to the field. (See illustration). They have their own winnowing fan called "hata" and use a basket named "gauni" for measuring paddy. The broom-sticks are neatly made of "kancho" (*Oriya*) reeds (Santali, *Kharang*). (See illustration).

Uduli



Jana

Hata

Industries

As far as cottage-industries are concerned, we did not find spinning and weaving a part of the serious programme of the Santals, as they depend on the neighbouring Hindu weavers to supply their clothes. However, in most houses, they possess these wheels and the indigenous ginning machine, which implies,

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

Eròk' Sim (June)

796 [243] The first agricultural festival of the tribe, *Eròk' Sim*, is connected with the sowing of paddy seeds in June.

796 782 It begins with each house-holder subscribing fowls which are sacrificed by the *Naeke* (village priest) at the *Jahèrthan* (Holy Grove) in honour of Maraṅ Buru, Jahèr era, Mòṇṛènko, Pargana, Gosane era and Mañjhi Haṛam, one for each. A speciality is that the Boundary Deity is offered a black fowl, while the remaining ones are sacrificed to the deities presiding over the adjacent quarters of the boundary. The priest then utters the following incantation:—

[539] "We salute you, Creator (Bapu Ṭhàkur), Jahèr era, Maraṅ Buru and others. In the name of the sowing festival, we are offering sacrifice unto you so that we may sow in one quarter and in twelve quarters these may flourish in a bumper crop. Let the wind bring rains. Let rains shower in profusion. Let no diseases visit the villages such as colic pain, head-ache, and bowel-complaints. Convey these diseases away in golden water-carrying apparatus, bound with golden chains, elsewhere, from the direct harm of the tribe. Let our cattle increase in number. Protect them from the attacks of wild animals, when they will frequent the jungles. Protect our hunting-dogs."

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 [782] almost identical to the *Erok' Sim*, the June sowing festival.

[114] [184] That this is an essential Santal festival is corroborated both by Risley and Dr. Campbell, but the Mayurbhanj Santals do not seem to observe it any longer.

796 *Iṛi Gundli Nànwàni* (The Millet Festival—August)

• 243 782 This festival is connected with the offering of the first fruits of millet (Iṛi, *Panicum milleceum* ; Gundli, *Panicum frumentaceum*) to the tribal gods of the Santals.

796 793 243 782 The essentials of the festival are that the *Nacke* (priest) after a purificatory ablution goes to the field of a *raiyat* (tenant) where the crop has ripened and harvests as much as he can. Then he goes to the *Jahèrthan*, cleanses it with cow-dung and offers the corn to all the gods of the Holy Grove viz. Jahèr era, Mòṇṛènko, Maraṅ Hòṛ, Gosa*ne* era and Pargana. Next he spills milk and utters the hymn:—

[539] 'We salute you Creator (Bapu Ṭhàkur) and Jahèr era. We offer you the first-fruits of our corn. We shall eat these, but let us have no bowel-complaints or head-ache."

The priest then returns to the village and going to the shrine in the Headman's house offers

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS
MAYURBHANJ

the new corn with a similar prayer. The remainder of the millet, he takes home for himself. 796 793 243

The Millet Festival, called *Muchri*, exists in all its details in Mayurbhanj and is observed by the Santals there. 782 [184]

Gamah Purnima (August)

Side by side with these harvest-festivals, the Santals of Mayurbhanj observe *Gamah Purnima* on the full-moon of *Sravan* (August), when cows are fed with salt, *mohua* flowers, rice, the corrosive *bhela* fruit and a grass called *mutha*, their horns being copiously rubbed with oil. Thereafter, men and women dance round a Karam (*Adina Cordifolia*) branch, planted at the *akhra* (place for dance), a special *Karam* dance, and on the conclusion immerse it in water. Ancestors are also propitiated with offerings of rice-beer. The Santals observe the festival along with some of the Hindus. All wear new clothes and indulge in feasts and drinks, not forgetting to feed Brahmins and Vaishnavas. 796 [535] [769] [171]

Karam Pòròb (September-October)

This is a festival observed in September-October. The males of the village go after nightfall and cut a branch of a *Karam* tree (*Adina Cordifolia*,) which they fix in the village lane (*kulhi*) and round which the young people dance till morning, when the Karam branch is thrown into a tank. 796 [824] [535]

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS
MAYURBHANJ

The special feature of the festival is that articles for worship are supplied by the priest himself, and only the male members of the tribe are allowed to eat the meat of the animals sacrificed. The priest then prays to the god *Ianthar* with the following incantations:—

We salute thee Father Creator *Pargana*.
We offer you all these in the name of *Ianthar*;
We pray that whatever we may eat, we may digest.
Let there be no diseases like headache, diarrhoea and bowel-complaints.
And bless our crop in the field, and grain in the barn.
Protect them from rats and other pestilence.

Ianthar (called by Risley *Ianthar puja*) is in effect the offering of the first fruit of low-land paddy, as *Iri Gundli* is of millets. Another name for the festival is *Baibar Horo* Nanwàni.

In course of our enquiries in Mayurbhanj, many Santals stated that this festival passes under the name of *Maamane*[1] there, as was very clear from the fact

1. One wonders if the name is Mak' *Mònrén* in disguise. It is stated by Dr. Campbell to be a festival observed by the Santals after five years or so when the god "Mònrènko" is propitiated with the sacrifice of a white goat. The account in the District Gazeteer of the Santal Parganas considers it "an occasional sacrifice performed as the result of a vow made at a time of great distress", when sacrifices are made to all the national *bongas* in the *Jaher-than*.

Bi Mukherjee O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

796 [243] that it is celebrated with the reaping of moist-land rice, and where there is no such corn to be harvested, there is no function. The date of this public ceremony is fixed in *Agrahayan* (Nov.—Dec.) by the "Móṇṛèn hòṛ" (the tribal assembly), when the village-priest procures a winnowing fan, vermilion, new earthen-pots and *mithi* (a kind of spice).

The Mayurbhanj festival, observed for two days, has *Um Naṛka* (the day of purification) as the first item. Early in the morning, the unmarried boys [857] [794] of the tribe repair and clean the small hut for Jahèr era at the Holy Grove (Jahèrthan), after fasting for a day. Towards evening, the villagers assemble at the house of the *Naeke* (village-priest) and old men and women invoke Maraṅ Buru, Jahèr era, Mòṇṛènko, Maraṅ Mañjhi Haṛam and Hudiñ Mañjhi Haṛam with proper songs. To ensure the presence of the deities, a dance is arranged at the Holy Grove; and if it is not possible, five men, being the number of the gods, rub a plantain with sun-dried rice when they are sure to respond to the tribal prayer. Next they sit on a mat. The priest gives them sun-dried rice which they rub in the winnowing fan. They 796 now show signs of frenzy (*Jhupar*). They are asked 789 their names by the priest and in a trance they name the five gods, one after another. Then the actor-deities are invoked and questioned so that the tribe may reap paddy in plenty, and how the

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

is intended. An exorcist is called in, who chants an incantation and allows his stick to strike all over the place. It is an unseen hand which guides him to the spot where the thing was buried. Soon they dig the place and unearth the uncanny deposit made by a malignant enemy, thus counteracting the spell cast. A peculiar instance of this nature is that when a man's cow yields a very large quantity of milk, a jealous enemy may bury milk itself, with the unholy hope that the process will diminish the supply. Similarly, if it is intended to bring harm to a man's harvest, rice is buried, and if a man's death is intended, a bone may be deposited in the earth.

754 756 789 789 578 [954]

Luck

Belief in luck is nothing special to the Santal. He has it in common with all the Muṇḍā tribes and the semi-Hinduised people of the Central Belt, not to speak of the caste-Hindus, many of whose superstitions have a similar flavour.

777 [171]

The Santals credit some persons with possessing "the luck of the threshing-floor." Those who are thus blest gather more harvest than others, and when they thresh the paddy, more of grains and less of chaff come out. This gift, however, can be 'stolen' by malignant persons and there are special methods of approaching such problems.

[243]

3s Mukherjee O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

777 352 Luck attached to a bed is tested in a peculiar way. The interstices between a stringed bed (*khatia*) are counted from its top to bottom, beginning with *ind*, then *cand*, then *jom*, and then *raja*, and so on till the end. If either *raja* or *cand* falls on the last space, the bed is lucky, and if either *ind* or *jom* falls on it, the bed is unlucky.

777 243 825 301 [823] In sowing millets, the luck of preserving the grains from the attack of pests is ensured in a special way. The sower wears a ring made from the scale of the *Harba* (Indian scaly ant-eater). This ring must be cut by a flint to protect its virtue; and should iron be used, it loses all its powers.[1]

Origin of Witch-Craft

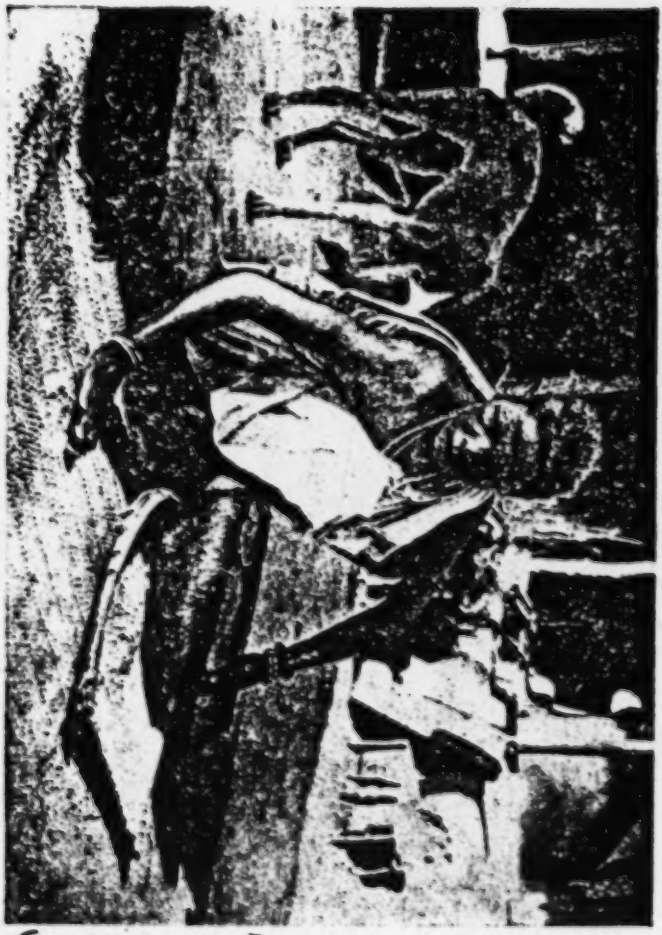
754 562 That the Santals have an uncanny faith in Witch-craft is known to many, but little is known about the fact that they consider all women as potential witches, who learnt their art, or rather stole it from Marañ Buru, the chief presiding deity, and how men in return learnt the craft of detecting the witches among women.

754 According to the sayings of the Santal patriarchs as we read in *Hòṛkorèn Mare Hapṛamko Reak'*

---

1 Dr. Campbell's *Santali to English Dictionary*, pages 22 and 265.

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42



142
231
291
301
302
516
243
285

Winnowing Corn

[Page 98]

Photo : Tilak Bandopadhyay

[End plate 7]

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

291
243
516

Santal Reapers

[Page 98]

Photo : D. S. Nahar

[End Plate 8]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

241 on a steep hill-side; when the wood of the felled
171 trees is dry, generally toward the end of the hot season, it is burned. In this way the ground is cleared, and when the rains set in, the seed is sown without any ploughing. The present-day Paharias make small holes with a crow-bar and drop the seed into the holes, especially of bajra, Sorghum vulgare Pers., of maize and of a few other kinds. This is all, except that they may
241 pluck away weeds. It is said that when the Santals in former times followed a similar mode of cultivation they simply sowed the seed (especially bajra) at the top of the cleared hill-side, the spreading being left to the water of the rains flowing down; in some cases, a branch of a thorn-tree (Zizyphus Jujuba Lam.) is said to have been pressed into a flat shape and dragged over the ground to spread the seed".

243
[46] From early morning till evening they work in the
[556] field. Rice is their staple food; in it wealth is reck-
[262] oned and from it they obtain their drink. Both sexes
[462] work in the field. Every man tries to secure agricultural fields near his house and also near a streamlet flowing. They cultivate their soil and also gather natural produce when their crops do not grow due to want of rain or for some other reasons. The Santals prepare two kinds of rice field. One type is adjoining their houses, the other is at some distance away from their houses, which is on high land.

Preparation of ricefield:— After selecting the site, the Santals clear the field of jungle and vegetation. Then they surround it with ridges but if the land is
[412] slopy then they make the ridge only on the lower
[407] side. With the hoe and a heavy leveller (karha) they

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

level the field as far as possible. With the help of plough the Santals plough the rice field several times before transplanting the rice seedlings. [243] [412] [407]

Transplantation :—In a rice field, during the months of May and June after making the earth loose they bring seeds in a basket and scatter them over the loose earth with the hand. Then the earth is again pressed down with the leveller and the seeds are thus buried in. [407] When the seedlings grow to a certain height they are then pulled out and transplanted two or three together in the prepared field. They transplant the seedlings about one foot apart and in rows. They have three kinds of transplanted paddy. The earliest varieties ripen in the month of September. The second one, which they transplant in high land, ripens in the month of October. The third variety becomes ripe between November and December and is transplanted in low land. In the Santal Paraganas the Santals have got another kind of crop which is done simply by sowing the paddy seeds in the prepared rice fields and which ripen in the month of August. The transplanting is generally done by the Santal women. [462]

Threshing :—When the crops grow properly and become ripe they cut them with sickle and carry them to a place which they clean with earth and cowdung. [412] There in the centre they keep one big stone, on which they strike the rice saplings. Sometimes they use bullocks for threshing. [231] A few bullocks, tied in a line, walk round and round on the spreading straw. With the above processes they separate the paddy from the stalk. Then with the winnowing fan they clean the paddy separating them from other impurities. [412]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

243 Before husking, the Santals treat the paddy in the following ways. First they soak the paddy in water by keeping in an earthern vessel for several hours, then they boil the soaked paddy. After boiling they spread the paddy on the courtyard for drying. They do not keep the paddy long in the sun because too much dried paddy will be brittle and during the time of husking the rice will break into pieces. After drying they store the paddy in baskets which they prepare with the strands of straw. Sometime they do it not by boiling but only drying in the sun. The paddy treated thus is husked either with a *"dhenki"* (husking machine) or with the pestle and mortar. To get clean rice the Santals husk the paddy more than once. Then with the winnowing fan they remove the husk separated from the grain.

[412]
[407]

AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS

407
[177]

Plough :—The Santals who live near the Bengal border or in low lands use generally the same type of plough which is used in Bengal, but the plough which is commonly used by the Santals is somewhat different from the Bengal plough.

The Santal plough consists of mainly, three parts, (*a*) the plough proper (nahel), (*b*) the plough beam (isi), (*c*) the yoke (arar).

The plough proper is made of a single piece of wood which is slightly curved forming an angle generally of 130° at its middle part where the body and the shoe meet each other. The handle (Karmba) which is four to six inches long and roughly circular in cross-section is not a separate piece of wood but simply a projected outward piece coming out from the body.

4; Biswas D, E-3,4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

and it is conducted according to the provision of the Indian Christian Marriage Act.

Material Culture. Material culture of the Santals of the Santal parganas has not much changed. They now wear cotton dhuties, shirts and gangees and the women have accepted cotton saris which are used by the Hindus. The well-to-do Christian Santals wear European dress, *i.e.* coats, pants, shirts, socks and shoes. The christian women wear Saris, blouses and petti coat according to the Hindu style.

Some of the younger men and women of the Christian community go out for employment in the towns and cities and when they come back they display their superior material culture, such as fountain pen, wristwatches and other luxury goods.

Rice beer is their important drink but the Christian missionaries make propaganda in favour of total abstinence, and the Christian Santals are gradually giving up this habit and tea is being substituted for it. Machine made cigarettes are slowly coming into use.

In the preparation of rice it seems they have copied something from the Bengali Hindus. The Santals like the Bengalis use boiled rice for their food and unboiled rice for offering to their tribal deities.

The indigenous husking machine of the Santals is mortar and pestle, but they also use husking lever (dhenki) in husking rice which they have copied from their Hindu neighbours.

The Santals, when they speak among themselves, use their own language. But with the 'Dikhus' in the Santal Parganas they speak in broken Hindi and

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

and legends of Hinduism. The linguistic evidence shows how their material culture has been vitally affected and has some bearing on the more elusive realm of thought and belief. The grammatical structure of Santali has little in common with that of the Indo-Aryan tongues. It is an agglutinative and not an inflectional language. There have, however, been large and extensive borrowings of words. An instructive example can be taken from their method of husking rice. The term *ḍhinki*, used for a foot-pedal rice husker, has been borrowed from Bengali, and a *ḍhinki* is found in almost every home. The rice that is husked at the time of making sacrifices must be prepared in the home of the village priest, and in its preparation the use of the older and more primitive *ukhuṛ* is obligatory. This is a wooden mortar in which the rice is husked by hand with a wooden pestle, or *tok*. Both these words are Austro-Asiatic in origin. It is likely that when the household adopted the new method of husking rice the tribe did not change over from the old method of husking the sacred rice for fear of a loss in efficacy. One reason given is that as the *ḍhinki* is operated by the foot, rice husked in the *ḍhinki* is unclean and so unfit for offering to the spirits. It may be that the association of a mortar and pestle with sexual symbolism enhanced its magical value. The symbolism in this case is familiar to the Santal mind, for one way of expressing differences of sex is to refer to boys as "pestles" and to girls as "mortars". The *ukhuṛ* has to be used by the medicine man in preparing remedies; it is also used at marriages, when the feet of the bridegroom's party are washed over an *ukhuṛ*, and an *ukhuṛ* filled with water is required during the death ceremonies. In Bengal the rice which forms the daily food of the people is boiled before husking, and the Santals follow the same method in preparing it; but the rice used in sacrifices, *adua caole*, is never so treated, being dried in the sun.

Among their domestic animals, the fowl, the dog and the goat have non-Bengali names, while the names for pigeons, sheep, pigs and, most important of all, their cattle are borrowed. Fowls, goats and pigs are all used in their sacrifices. In the realm of wild life the Santal has found little need to borrow a vocabulary from his neighbours. Wild animals, birds, trees and shrubs, many fish and insects, also snakes, have Santali names. The same is true of most of the weapons used in hunting. Although the term for paddy is Santal, the names of all the implements now used in rice cultivation and the terms for the

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

different kinds of rice fields are Bengali. Maize, a cereal that is important in their economy, has a borrowed name, but other lesser cereals retain their Santali names. In Bankura the Santals have lost the use of their own numerals beyond seven, though apparently these are known and commonly used elsewhere. Even so, in Bankura the Santal word for "twelve" is still used in phrases connected with the recital of tribal traditions, as in the phrase *gelbar paris*, meaning the "twelve clans". Iron has a Santali name, but other metals now in use, such as lead, copper and brass, have Bengali names. In addition to brass and earthenware utensils, the Santals make extensive use of the leaves of the *sal* tree (Santali *sarjom*), which they plait to form many varieties of plates, cups, pipes and cigarettes, and they possess a wide vocabulary to distinguish between the different kinds. Brass and earthen pots they buy from others.[1]

The difficulties of determining the extent of their borrowings in the field of religion may be illustrated by the fact that the language of spells and of prayers offered at the time of sacrificing contains a strong admixture of Hindi-Bengali words. This would seem to indicate that there have been many borrowings at this point; but it is also possible that the one who makes the prayers, wishing to put himself into a favourable relation with the spirits, uses a special vocabulary and so removes himself from the common run of his people when he is acting as a mediator between them and the spirit world. Many of the songs sung nowadays are composed in Bengali. There is a large stock of riddles, some of which are asked and answered in Santali, others of which are asked and answered in Bengali, while yet others make use of both languages.[2]

Only incidental reference has been made to the impact of Moslem culture on Santal life. Reminiscences occur of the period of Moslem rule, such as the following statement: "Concerning the *Turuk* (*Turuk*, or Turk, the name by which Santals refer to Moslems), it is said that they ruin our spirits because they cut the throats of fowls the wrong way. If we eat

[1] Another discussion of the linguistic evidence, giving many examples, and the whole stated from a somewhat different point of view, is to be found in Professor Sten Konow's introduction to Bodding's collection of Folk-Tales.

[2] In a suggestive article published in *Africa* for June 1946, Professor F. C. Bartlett has expanded his thesis in the Julian Huxley lecture of 1944 that each primitive culture displays both "hard" and "soft" points. The methods which he has outlined for determining, in the examination of any particular culture, what constitute the hard and soft points, and in particular the story method, may furnish valuable results when applied to the study of Santal culture.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

CHAPTER 3

THE RHYTHM OF DAILY LIFE

THE rhythm of daily life in an agricultural community grows out of the close relationship between the activities of man and the cycle of nature. Work and recreation depend upon the seasons and their contrasts of heat and cold, of dry and wet weather, of springtime and harvest. The Santals distinguish three seasons during the year, each possessing a characteristic climate. The "cold days" last from November to March. The rice harvest is gathered during the earlier part of this season; food is therefore plentiful and people relax. The skies for the most part remain clear, and the absence of movement in the air causes a blue haze to hang over the villages in the evenings, formed by the wood smoke of the cooking fires. The nights are cold; morning and evening the folk crouch over small fires in the open to warm themselves. Sometimes, when the wind blows off the distant Himalayas, the days are also cold. The new year begins at this time. Then come the "heat days", when the west wind scorches the skin during the midday hours and often the nights too are unbearably hot. From time to time a storm blows up from the north-west in the late afternoon, stirring the dust and then laying it and cooling the earth with welcome raindrops, while loud claps of thunder are heard and vivid flashes of lightning chase across the sky. During these days the forest trees shed their leaves and take on a garment of new green, flowering trees make gay patterns against the deep blue of the sky, while both men and women spend much time in the forests, the former hunting and fishing, the women gathering fruits, leaves and roots. Springs, streams and wells dry up, and many women have to go long distances to obtain water for domestic needs. Then come the "heavy-rain days", which last from the end of June till October, the time of the south-west monsoon on which so much depends. Eagerly the Santals watch the signs of the sky, working for long hours until all the rice seedlings have been planted out; then rain and sun are left to bring the increase, while men watch and tend the fields.

The year is also divided into two parts, one of which, the season from June until the new harvest has been reaped, is known as "hunger-time". This name is an eloquent reminder of the danger of starvation; even in normal years the Santal's holding of land is insufficient to support his family. The years

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

not learn to play any of these instruments. Young girls may be seen sometimes trying out their brothers' instruments, but they put them away with childish things. Their singing is, however, their peculiar glory. Not only do they sing while dancing, but on many other occasions. As the women of a village return home in the evening from their visit to the weekly market or after a day of gathering leaves in the forest, their high- and soft-toned singing can be heard coming over the fields. During the transplantation of the rice seedlings they sing as they bend over their task. Their songs during this activity are of a special class known as *hephel'*, a word which means the plucking of the seedlings and weeding. Men also sing, and when one is narrating the traditions of the tribe or relating a story he will often break into song to illustrate a point or amplify the story. Santal melodies are as a rule pitched high and in a minor key. The range of the tunes is meagre and rarely makes use of more than three or four different notes in the scale. One unfailing characteristic is a long-drawn-out succession of repeated single notes at the end of each line. Nevertheless, they afford scope for the expression of the dominant emotions experienced by the Santals, whose devotion to dancing and song has developed among them a high degree of musical aptitude. In order that they may easily and quickly memorize the great number of different rhythms with which they have to be familiar, they have invented a series of mnemonics which they repeat at the opening of a dance or a song. One example of such mnemonics, associated with the *doṅ* dances, is as follows:[1]

"Bhendaṅ netaṅ | dak' taṅ netaṅ | din dupuṅ | din dupuṅ—
bhendaṅ netaṅ | dak' taṅ netaṅ | dak' dupuṅ | dak' dupuṅ."

[1] Bodding's *Dictionary*, Vol. II, p. 112.

At Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

the *Sakrat*. At this time offerings are made to the ancestors in each house, and the celebration is accompanied by a display of stick dancing, which has replaced the former "sword and shield" dance. At the end of the following month the *Mag Sim*, the hen at the end of the month of *Mag*, is offered. In former times the village officials used to resign at this time and could be either replaced or reappointed, but the only relic of the old practice that has survived is that the headman has to treat the whole village to beer. Contracts with servants are renewed during the festival, and they receive the cloth that is always a part of the contract. In connection with rice cultivation there is the *Erok' Sim*, the hen that is offered at the time of sowing, and *Nàwài*, when the first fruits of the first rice crop are offered in the sacred grove. Before this takes place the new rice must not be eaten. The village priest cuts the first handful of the crop and offers some at the foot of each of the chief trees. A sprig is also tied round the trunk of the trees and remains there. While the prayer is being said, milk is poured on the offering. After the priest has done his part, similar offerings are made in every house to the house spirits and the ancestors, the rice being taken from the crops belonging to the family. In varying degrees the Santals share in some of the festivals and practices of the low-caste cultivators around them. In the early monsoon days, during the period of *Rohini*, which is an auspicious time for sowing rice, they make a mark round their houses with cowdung as a protection against snakes. The snake goddess festival occurs in late August, and although its observance is not widespread among the Santals there are some local celebrations, especially when there is an *ojha* in the village. The *ojhas* all keep this festival, and others go to them at this time to ask for medicines against snakebite. Some Hindu festivals, as we have seen, furnish the occasion for large gatherings of Santals. At Sarenga, in addition to the Lakshmi Puja, a somewhat smaller gathering takes place during the hot weather in connection with the celebration of the Siva Gajon at a local temple. At this time the Charak, or hook-swinging festival, otherwise known as the *Pata*, takes place. The practice has almost died out within the last fifteen years. It had been prohibited by the government, but as long as the old generation, which was accustomed to the practice, remained it continued with gradually diminishing fervour. The Santals gather now to sing and to dance. They also join the throngs of pilgrims, sightseers and traders who collect at the Bogri *mela*, or fair,